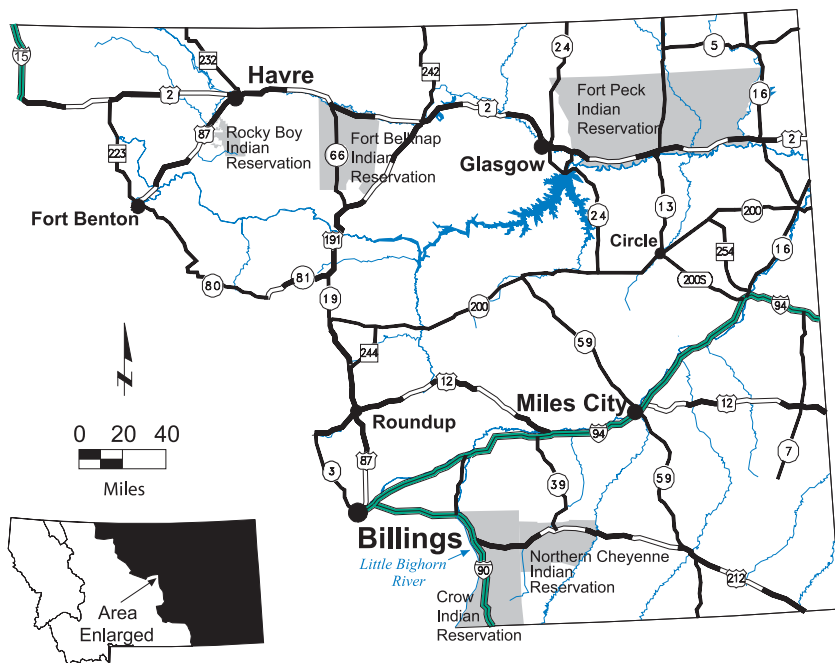


Eastern Fishing District



Areas excluded from fishing districts.
Additional regulations may apply.
Other federal or tribal permits may be required.

The Eastern Fishing District includes all waters lying east of the Central Fishing District. For the boundary description, see Central Fishing District, page 41.

Note: Roadways that are used as boundaries between the Central and Eastern Fishing Districts are interpreted to be in the Central Fishing District.

For additional information regarding the boundaries of this district, please call the following regional headquarters Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.:

Billings	406-247-2940
Glasgow	406-228-3700
Great Falls.....	406-454-5840
Havre Area Resource Office.....	406-265-6177
Lewistown Area Office.....	406-538-4658
Miles City	406-234-0900
TDD (Telephone device for the deaf)	406-444-1200

Eastern Fishing District

Closed Waters

Waters operated as fish hatcheries and rearing ponds by FWP and the US Fish and Wildlife Service shall be closed to fishing at all times. Waters in which FWP operates fish traps and other structures are closed to fishing as posted. Certain water-supply lakes, streams and hazardous areas are also closed as posted.

Dam Closures and Restrictions

In the interest of public health and safety, certain areas above and below most dams are closed to the public. These restrictions include areas where no public access is allowed below the ordinary high-water mark. The restricted areas are identified and delineated by signs and/or boat restraining systems.

The following dams are closed to all boating, sailing, floating, swimming, fishing or other recreational activity as marked by boat restraining systems or as posted to restrict access. Other dams not listed here may also be posted for restricted access. For more information call the FWP Fishing Access Coordinator at 406-444-7885, or contact the Bureau of Reclamation at 406-247-7296, Army Corp of Engineers, or PPL Montana at 406-533-3415.

- Anita Dam (Yellowstone County)
- Fort Peck Dam (Valley County)
- Fresno Dam (Hill County)

Beaver Ponds

Beaver ponds on streams are governed by the same regulations that govern the streams.

Irrigation Canals and Ditches

Man-made irrigation canals and ditches are open year round unless stated otherwise in exceptions to standard regulations. The same daily and possession limits apply to them as for rivers/streams.

Reservoirs

Reservoirs are artificially impounded water behind a man-made dam extending upstream to the mouth of its inlet stream(s). Under normal operations, reservoir pool elevation, surface acreage, and the mouths of the inlet stream(s) are expected to vary throughout the year. The inlet stream(s) is often managed under seasons, limits and special regulations that differ from the reservoir regulations. Stream regulations apply to water upstream from the mouth on the reservoir. Streams are defined by a sloped streambed that results in a defined current flow between two discernible stream banks.

Transporting Live Fish

An import permit is required to bring live fish of any kind into Montana. It is unlawful to possess or transport any live fish away from the body of water in which the fish were taken without authorization from FWP with the following exceptions:

- 1) transportation of fish for authorized commercial purposes (eg. Baitfish Seining Permit, Commercial Fish Ponds, Commercial Fishing, etc.);
- 2) use as live bait subject to restrictions imposed by the FWP Commission for the taking, transport and use of live baitfish (see **"Bait Regulations"** below); or
- 3) within the boundaries of the Eastern Fishing District. It is unlawful to possess or transport live fish, other than authorized baitfish, on roadways that form the boundary between the Eastern and Central fishing districts.

Boat and Motor Restrictions

A complete, updated, copy of the Montana Boating Laws may be obtained by contacting any FWP office or any FWP license agent. All passengers under the age of 12 must wear a PFD at all times when the boat is in motion if the boat is less than 26 feet long. A wearable, U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD must be available for each occupant of any boat.

Warm Water Game Fish Stamp

The 1999 Montana Legislature passed a bill to require the purchase of a warm water game fish stamp. The warm water game fish stamp is required to possess warm water fish on the following waters in the Eastern Fishing District:

- Anita Reservoir, Yellowstone Co.
- Arapooish Pond, Big Horn Co.
- Bailey Reservoir, Hill Co.
- Baker Lake, Fallon Co.
- Bearpaw Lake, Hill Co.
- Beaver Creek, Wibaux Co.
- Beaver Creek Reservoir, Hill Co.
- Box Elder Creek Reservoir, Sheridan Co.
- Castle Rock Lake, Rosebud Co.
- Catfish Reservoir, Fergus Co.
- Conter's Bass Pond, Yellowstone Co.
- Cow Creek Reservoir, Blaine Co.
- Dry Fork Reservoir, Blaine Co.
- Engdahl Cottonwood Reservoir, Garfield Co.
- Ester Lake, Phillips Co.
- Fort Peck Reservoir
- Fort Peck Dredge Cut Pond, Valley Co.
- Fresno Reservoir, Hill Co.
- Gartside Lake, Richland Co.
- Haughian (Dan Haughian) Reservoir, Custer Co.
- Hollands Reservoir, Fergus Co.
- Homestead Reservoir, Prairie Co.
- Hopalong Reservoir, Fergus Co.
- Iliad Reservoir, Chouteau Co.
- Johnson Dam, Dawson Co.
- Lake Elmo, Yellowstone Co.
- Little Warm Reservoir, Phillips Co.
- Maier Reservoir, Fallon Co.
- Nelson Reservoir, Phillips Co.
- Payola Reservoir, Petroleum Co.
- Petrolia Reservoir, Petroleum Co.
- Schlesinger Reservoir #1, Rosebud Co.
- Schoonover Reservoir #1, Chouteau Co.
- Silvan Pond, Chouteau Co.
- Silvertip Reservoir, Prairie Co.
- South Fork Dry Blood Reservoir, Petroleum Co.
- South Sandstone Reservoir, Fallon Co.
- Talcott Pond, Carter Co.
- Tongue River Reservoir, Big Horn Co.
- Trumbo Pond, Garfield Co.
- Upper Wolf Coulee Reservoir, Fergus Co.
- Wapiti Reservoir, Phillips Co.
- Warm Springs Creek, Fergus Co.

Methods of Taking Fish

- A valid fishing license is required for all types of fishing.
- Spears and bows are considered lines for purposes of determining line limits.
- When multiple lines are allowed on a body of water, the maximum number of lines allowed shall not exceed the greater of either the attended lines or the setlines. For example, if an angler is snagging for paddlefish on the Yellowstone River (where the limit is 2 attended lines or 6 setlines), he/she may only have 4 setlines in use if he/she is using two attended lines, for a total of 6 lines.

Hook and Line Limits

Open Water

Rivers and Streams

- 6 lines with 6 hooks per line. The line/s must be attended and in the angler's immediate control unless they are used as setlines. See regulations for Setlines below.

Lakes and Reservoirs

- 2 lines with 2 hooks per line. All lines must be attended and in the angler's immediate control unless they are used as setlines. See regulations for Setlines below.

Ice Fishing

Lakes, Reservoirs, Rivers and Streams

- 6 lines with 2 hooks per line through the ice. When a line is used through the ice, the angler need not be in immediate control but must be in the vicinity and in visual contact with the line unless they are used as setlines. See regulations for Setlines below.

Size of Hole

- There is no size limit for a hole used for ice fishing or with a spear.

Shelters

- Shelter definition/use: Any hut or enclosure constructed of any material, except ice or snow, for the purpose of ice fishing.
- It is illegal to use any ice fishing shelter not conforming to the following rules.
 - Shelter identification: Identification must be painted on or otherwise affixed to all unattended shelters in legible, 2-inch letters plainly visible at a distance of 100 feet. Identification must include the owner's name and address, name and phone number, or 9/10-digit ALS number. Attended shelters at Bearpaw Lake and Beaver Creek Reservoir must also be identified.
 - Inspection: Each closed shelter shall have a door that an officer may readily open from the outside for inspection when it is occupied.
 - Waste and rubbish disposal: Owners and occupants of shelters are required to keep their shelters (and the area immediately around them) free from rubbish and trash. Anglers must remove waste materials before they leave for the day.
 - Shelter removal after the season: The owner of an ice fishing shelter shall remove it from the ice before it becomes irretrievable at the end of the season, or within five days from receipt of notification from FWP to remove the shelter.

Setlines

- Number of lines is the same as for Hook and Line Limits. Setlines may be used in all waters unless prohibited in the District Exceptions to Standard Regulations.
- Setlines (unattended lines) must be checked by the owner at least once every 24 hrs.
- The fisherman's name and phone number or 9/10-digit ALS# must be attached to each line.
- Setlines shall not be attached to jugs or other floating devices.

Bow and Arrow

All waters open to angling are open to taking paddlefish and nongame fish by bow and arrow. Crossbows are illegal.

Nets and Traps

Landing nets may be used for landing hooked fish. See Bait Regulations for use of nets to harvest bait fish.

Hoop Nets

- The use of hoop nets is permitted in certain areas of the Eastern Fishing District.
- The use of hoop nets is limited to licensed resident anglers.
- A permit is required. Permit applications and rules are available at FWP offices in Billings, Miles City and Glasgow.

Snagging

Snagging nongame fish is allowed on all open waters in the Eastern District except on the Missouri River downstream from Fort Benton to the North Dakota border, and on the Yellowstone River downstream from the mouth of the Bighorn River, where only paddlefish may be snagged by anglers with a valid paddlefish tag. All waters open to angling are open to snagging paddlefish during the open paddlefish season by anglers with a valid tag. Snagging chinook salmon is allowed on Fort Peck Reservoir only from October 1 through November 30.

Spearing

In all waters open to fishing, nongame fish, northern pike, burbot (ling), walleye and whitefish may be taken with rubber or spring-propelled spears by persons swimming or submerged. Spears may be used through the ice for nongame fish, northern pike, walleye, sauger and burbot (ling).

Bait Regulations

- Game fish, including yellow perch, may not be used as bait except as authorized below under Dead Bait.
 - Possession of live bait fish is prohibited on waters closed to using live bait.
 - It is illegal to release live bait of any kind into Montana waters; do not empty any live bait containers at your fishing site.
 - Where live fish may be used as bait (see list below under Live Bait), legal nongame fish may be taken for use as bait in the following manner:
 - with hook and line; or
 - with seines no larger than 12 feet by 4 feet; or
 - with minnow traps (the dimensions shall not exceed 24 inches x 12 inches x 12 inches); or
 - with cast nets (maximum 6-foot radius) and dip nets (no larger than 3 feet x 3 feet).
 - Legal nongame fish, except sculpins (genus *Cottus*) which must be killed prior to transport, may only be transported live:
 - to or from waters where live fish may be used as bait in the Central Fishing District, or
 - anywhere within the boundaries of the Eastern Fishing District.
- [Note: Sculpins (genus Cottus) may not be used for bait in the Western District.]*
- Landowner permission is required to capture live bait from privately owned ponds.
 - See Commercial Fishing License requirements for information on commercial harvest permits.

Dead Bait

- Nongame fish that are freshly killed or have been preserved by freezing, salting or pickling may be used as bait on all waters not restricted to artificial flies and lures. Heads and entrails of nongame fish may also be used as bait.
- Whole game fish may not be used as bait.
- Parts/pieces of bass, burbot (ling), channel catfish, crappie, northern pike, paddlefish, sauger, shovelnose sturgeon, tiger muskellunge, walleye, or yellow perch may be used as bait if edible portions are not wasted.
- The eggs of char, cisco, grayling, salmon or trout may be used as bait. Parts/pieces of salmonids may not be used as bait.

Live Bait

- Live bait fish may not be imported into Montana.
- Live animals such as meal worms, red worms, night crawlers, leeches, maggots, crayfish, reptiles, amphibians and insects may be used as bait on all waters not restricted to artificial lures. Leeches may only be imported into Montana from FWP-approved leech dealers and may be acquired from approved bait dealers in Montana. Anglers who import leeches must have in their possession a bill-of-sale from the approved out-of-state leech dealer when fishing with leeches in Montana. A list of approved out-of-state leech dealers may be obtained from FWP by calling 406-452-6181.
- Nongame fish that may be used as live bait in the Eastern District include all nongame species except black bullheads, bluegill, carp, goldfish, green sunfish, pumpkinseed, rainbow smelt, sculpins, stonecats and yellow bullheads.
- Live nongame fish may be used as bait only in the following waters:

Rivers and Streams

All streams and rivers in the Eastern Fishing District except:

- Milk River and its tributaries upstream from Fresno Dam.
- Beaver Creek upstream from Beaver Creek Reservoir.

Lakes, Reservoirs, Ponds and Impoundments

- Big Horn Co. - Tongue River Reservoir
- Blaine Co. - Cow Creek Reservoir, Dry Fork Reservoir, Lyons Reservoir, and all BLM reservoirs
- Carter Co. - Doug Gardner #2 Reservoir, Talcott Pond
- Custer Co. - Spotted Eagle Pond
- Daniels Co. - Whitetail Reservoir
- Dawson Co. - Johnson Reservoir, Lee (Sam) Reservoir, Lindsay Reservoir
- Fallon Co. - Baker Lake, South Sandstone Reservoir
- Fort Peck Reservoir
- Garfield Co. - Whiteside Reservoir
- Hill Co. - Beaver Creek Reservoir, Bailey Reservoir
- McCone Co. - Flat Lake, Hedstrom Reservoir
- Milk River impoundments downstream of Fresno Dam
- Petroleum Co. - Petrolia Reservoir
- Phillips Co. - Cole Ponds, Ester Reservoir, Frenchman Reservoir, Little Warm Reservoir, McChesney Reservoir, Nelson Reservoir, and all BLM reservoirs
- Richland Co. - Buxbaum West Reservoir, Gartside Reservoir, Kuester Reservoir
- Roosevelt Co. - Bainville Railroad Ponds
- Rosebud Co. - Castle Rock Lake, Schlesinger Perch Pond
- Sheridan Co. - Box Elder Reservoir, Engstrom Reservoir, Medicine Lake Nat. Wildlife Refuge, Raymond Reservoir
- Valley Co. - Fort Peck Dredge Cut Trout Pond, Grub Reservoir, Gut Shot Reservoir, Shoot Reservoir, Triple Crossing Reservoir, Valley Reservoir, VR2 Reservoir, Wards Res., and all BLM reservoirs in the Willow Creek Drainage
- Wibaux Co. - Lame Steer Reservoir
- Yellowstone Co. - Anita Reservoir

Daily and Possession Limits

Possession limit means the number of fish that you may possess at any time in any form: fresh, stored in freezers or lockers, salted, smoked, dried, canned or otherwise preserved. It is illegal to preserve fish (salted, smoked, dried, canned, or otherwise preserved) before taking them to your permanent residence (the physical abode or structure you maintain as your principal, legal residence) unless those fish can be counted. Mobile recreational vehicles, travel trailers, tents or storage/freezer lockers do not qualify as permanent residences. No person may sell or take for the purpose of sale any fish except as authorized in commercial fishing regulations.

Daily limit means the number of fish you may legally take during a calendar day. It is unlawful to exceed the standard daily limit unless the regulations for the water body where you are fishing specify a different limit. "Legally taken" means fish caught and not immediately released alive. Where catch and release is allowed, fish released alive are considered not taken. A fish when landed and not immediately released becomes part of the daily limit of the person originally hooking the fish, even if the fish is donated to another person. If you receive fish from another angler, those fish also become part of your daily limit. You may possess the daily limit allowed only for the body of water on which you are fishing.

Handling and Transporting Legally Taken Fish

While a person is fishing, or while on the water or on the ice:

- All fish in possession must be visibly identifiable to species.
- For a species of fish where size limits apply, all fish in possession must be whole with head, skin, fins and tail attached. Gills and entrails may be removed.
- Fish may be dressed and filleted for immediate consumption.
- Fish may be dressed and filleted for transport to your permanent residence, unless size limits apply, under the following conditions:
 - All fish can be counted and identified. Two fillets will be counted as one fish. If the catch is frozen prior to transport, each fish or fillet must be packaged so it can be counted.
 - Salmonids (trout, salmon, grayling, char and whitefish): the entire skin must be attached to the fillet for identification.
 - Non-salmonids: a minimum of one inch by one inch square shoulder patch of skin with scales must remain attached to each fillet for identification.
 - In areas where it is necessary to distinguish between sauger and walleye, fish must be kept whole for identification while on the water (see District Exceptions). Gills and entrails may be removed. Sauger and walleye may be filleted unless size limits apply, only when you are off the water and done fishing for the day.